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An organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT — DECREASING RELIEF

The rising tide of opposition to federal expenditures for relief, and the move in the name of balanced budgets to return relief to the over-burdened localities comes at a strange time. While needy people are being dropped from home and work relief rolls, industry is not coming through with the promised jobs, but is, on the contrary, laying off workers. We cannot refuse to face such appalling facts. They confront us, inescapably.

THE NUMBER OF THE JOBLESS

Estimates of the number of unemployed range from the Federal Census report of 10,870,000 totally unemployed to the *World-Telegram* estimate of approximately 16,000,000—including part-time workers, young people seeking jobs, and those who have lost jobs since the census was taken. And the figures continue to roll up in the wake of the late securities deflation.

"Reports from their (the WPA authorities') field observers increasingly dwell on lay-offs, reductions of operation schedules, and open discharges of men. In numerous localities employment totals have fallen off between 10 and 20% in the past few months, and in special situations considerably more than 20%. (N. Y. *Times,* Nov. 20.) Corrington Gill, Assistant Administrator of the WPA, states that "unemployment has increased abruptly, seriously changing the outlook for relief needs for the winter. . . . We can expect a substantial increase in unemployment." *(Federated Press.)*

THE IMMIGRATION OF IRON MEN

The invention of new machinery, like "an immigration of iron men," displaces men and greatly increases unemployment. This technological threat to human beings (described by the report of the National Resources Committee) shows that in 1920 the percentage of unemployment to the available labor supply was 6; in 1921, it rose to 25; in 1929, dropped to 10. But by 1933 the percentage had risen to 47, and is undoubtedly higher now. A chart shows the relation of the worker to the amount of work he does,—"Employee man-years to unit of production." Using 1920 as 100, the number of years of a man's work needed to produce a given unit drops to 79 in 1929, then on down to 72 in 1935. It required only 72 men to produce in 1935 what it took 100 men to produce in 1920.

Can the profit system bear up under a still heavier load of unemployment?

That is what confronts us. Added to technological unemployment is the unemployment due to increase in population. Between 700,000 and 800,000 young people come to employable age each year and raise the list of jobless, either being unemployed themselves or displacing older workers. If industrial techniques remained the same year after year, the increase in the working population would still demand an increase of 20% in the productivity of 1937 over that of 1929.

Is it not true that technological improvements ought to work for human and social good—to the worker in shorter hours, better pay, and improved working conditions? To the consuming public in more commodities at lower prices? Is it not also true, however, that under the profit system this does not work out? Why not?

"Planned public housing projects, such as slum clearance, which afford the most efficient methods of utilizing advanced technologies in the building industry, crash against the wall of vested private property interests. . . . Among the political factors to impede technological change is the power of dominant industrial groups to control legislation to their interests as against beneficial innovations that imperil their profits. . . . There are likewise religious forces that as a rule cement the *status quo,* and buttress resistant attitudes whose roots lie in more materialistic causes." (Report of National Resources Committee.)

WHAT HAPPENS TO WPA LAY-OFFS?

To unemployment from all these causes must be added the:

WPA Lay-Offs. Last spring WPA appropriations were cut. The appropriation for May, 1937, was $675,000,000 *less* than that of the previous May. As a consequence 500,000 workers were laid off, and many excellent and useful projects were halted or eliminated entirely.

Private industry, it was said, would re-employ the workers discharged from WPA. But what really happened to them? "In Cleveland, and Columbus, 75% of the laid-off workers promptly applied for home relief. In Toledo, 62%; in Indianapolis, 60%. These figures indicate the general situation. In Illinois the number of persons on relief increased from June to July by 12,000 or 2.8%, and of the total of cases opened, more than 14,000 were reopened cases." *(Christian Century,* Sept. 22.)

A Scripps-Howard survey from twenty widely separated cities reports (N. Y. *World-Telegram,* Aug. 20) that "private employment, save in certain seasonal occupations and a few localities, is not absorbing more than a fraction of the persons dismissed from relief. . . . In New York City nearly 24,000 of the more than 35,000 dismissed by WPA since June 30 have applied for direct relief. But only 14,623 of them have been granted such help. . . . Of the 700 dismissed by WPA in the Cincinnati district in June, 95% have applied for direct relief, and only a handful have obtained it. On the Pacific coast, the WPA cuts at San Francisco have been accompanied by a marked increase in applications for direct relief . . . there are few jobs for former WPA employees."

The Emergency Relief Bureau of New York City reports that the average weekly rate of applicants (families) for home relief was 3,526 during September; 4,412 for October; 4,711 for November; and for the week ending December 3 it was 6,500. The percentage found eligible and accepted for home relief is approximately 53%.

By the way, what happens to those not "eligible"?

SOME ILLUSIONS DISPELLED

From its study of eleven selected communities *Fortune* (Oct., 1937) poses a group of categorical questions with equally categorical answers:

1. Are the reliefers "bums"? For the great majority, the cold percentage tables absolutely disprove this. Less than one-tenth have lost their jobs through personal failure.
2. Did industry "fire" the reliefers because they could not do their jobs? No.
3. Do the reliefers ask for too much help? No.
4. Has industry taken back half of the reliefers? 45%.
5. Is there a shortage of skilled labor? Yes.
6. Is the WPA "spoiling" otherwise employable men? WPA hasn't spoiled the men who have already left its rolls. Age and disability are what are slowing down the ones that remain.
7. Are the local communities doing as good a job of giving direct relief to unemployables as the federal government did two years ago? In most cases the answer is an unqualifiable negative.

"JOBLESS" TRAGEDIES

A hungry and desperate mother abandoned her four-year-old baby daughter (N. Y. *Post,* Dec. 15). When charged with the crime, her report as to the budget upon which she had been compelled to exist brought a sympathetic offering of money from the court, and dismissal of the charges. The *Post* writes, "Relief had let her and her children endure hunger. Relief gave her $16.50 a month for herself, her daughter and her small son. Rent took $12. That left $4.50 per month for food. It left so little that, paradoxically, it saved Mrs. Midgeley's life. When she decided to commit suicide by jumping in front of a subway train she had no nickel to put in the turnstile."

The editor concludes: "They wept in the court room for Mrs. Midgeley. Society always weeps for any unfortunate who, lifted out of obscurity, is placed where society can see. We are wondering today about the many thousands of Mrs. Midgeleys still hidden by the relief rolls, enjoying no better conditions than hers and with none to weep for them. How com-

fortable is our metropolitan bigness which, hiding away victims of inadequate relief, spares us the necessity of weeping for more than one at a time, every now and then."

The story of Larry Roebuck, age 27, is told by a reporter on another New York paper. His baby had died, deprived of the milk and orange juice which WPA wages could not buy. Because he had remained home to mourn his child's death instead of being on the WPA job, he had been fired. Tearfully, he came to the police. The Emergency Relief Bureau had been investigating (?) the case so long that his wife and four remaining children were starving.

Since the system of mass production depends upon mass consumption, what is the economic limit to the number of those without purchasing power? What is the moral limit (for Christians)? How much poverty is compatible with brotherhood? Would not justice demand work for all? Then—how much is "fair" relief?

LOW LIVING STANDARDS

Studies in the amount of home relief grants show an appallingly low standard of living. The *Christian Century* reports that the relief grants in Cook County (Ill.) average $11.38 per person per month; in down-state Illinois counties, only $5.24 per person per month. One state had a minimum relief of $7.96 per family per month, and another as low as $4., according to a study made by the American Association of Social Workers. *(Survey,* Aug., 1937.)

Families on relief in New Jersey must live 40% below the minimum subsistence standard, according to D. H. MacNeil, former relief official. He points out that the $33 average relief per family for a month is about 60% of the minimum subsistence level of $55. The October average in Hoboken was $14.16 per family. "It is false economy," he says, "to cut relief; it is only illusory savings. If indigent families become sick they must have hospitalization. The children become poor pupils, . . . retarded or delinquent. That costs money."

What else, in terms of human life and social well-being, does inadequate relief cost?

AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

The so-called American standard of living requires a minimum per family of four of from $25 a week in the South to $35 per week on the Pacific Coast (*Survey,* Sept., 1937). The U. S. Department of Labor agrees closely with these figures, stating that between $1200 and $2000 per year per family is necessary for minimum life and decency. The study made by the WPA Division of Social Research on costs of living in 59 different cities found that even minimum housing standards—one room to a person and indoor bath and toilet—could not be met on prevailing salaries. An income of $903 was considered the mere emergency level. The sum of $1261 needed to live at a maintenance level in March, 1935, would have to be increased to $1317 in 1937. Foregoing figures are for families; however, the New York Department of Labor recently stated that a woman working in New York who lived alone needed a minimum salary of $23.36 a week, or $1215 a year. If she lived with her family she would need $20.73 a week, $1078 a year (N. Y. *Times,* Dec. 15, 1937).

WHO GETS IT?

In 1929, the best year for the profit system, one-fifth of the American families lived on less than $1000 (Brookings Institute). In 1932 nine out of ten families did not receive the health and decency standard of $2000. In 1929, 42% of families were under the $1500 level, 77% were below the $2000 level. In 1932, 59% of families were under the $1500 level, 88% under the $2000 level.

Over one-half the families in the United States were living on less than $1250 in 1935 and 1936. (Lubin, Bureau of Labor Statistics.) And a third on less than $1000.

In New York City a survey (N. Y. *Post,* Dec. 20, 1937) reveals one-fourth the workers receiving less than $20 per week. Half the Negro families exist on $16 a week or less. Josephine Roche, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, reports that of 750,000 families living on less than $1000 a survey revealed the death rate to be two times as great as in families with a higher income.

With winter deepening the hazards to health and life, the situation is critical. The President has often repeated that no one shall starve. But this hope has not been realized, and multitudes are so near the starvation line that only a thin rationalization can argue that Mr. Roosevelt's promise is being kept.

In the face of such a situation, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the Crusaders, and other groups representing big interests dare to demand a cut in the already inadequate relief appropriations! They urge the return of relief to cities and localities—which would mean too much of a load on some areas, and not enough on others. Unemployment is a *national* problem.

Are we again to see human lives used as the football of politicians and industrialists?

THE CUT IN RELIEF

Despite all these facts, the nation as a whole has been cutting relief appropriations. The Social Security Board reports that the "national public relief bill for the first nine months of this year (1937) was $152,416,000 less than in 1936." (N. Y. *Times,* Nov. 24, 1937.) In November the desperate need for increased relief appropriation was stressed by the National Conference of Mayors. They, close to the actual need, condemned the reactionary "stop-spending" policy demanded by Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau.

Business has been using the slump as a tool to cudgel down taxes and remove government "interference" with its "freedom." Some political and business leaders are blaming the slump on the unbalanced budget, due mainly, they say, to relief. The truth is that there has been a severe cutting of relief expenditures. WPA received a bit over 461 million in 1937 as compared with 772 million in 1936. And most of those who complain about relief spending are glad to spend even more for huge army and navy appropriations. Furthermore, there is a failure to recognize that relief-spending actually contributes to national wealth and can do more than any other one thing to restore the buying power of unemployed masses and thus help the faltering profit system back to a measure of productivity.

Did the Hoover policy of cutting relief to the bone help the system?

SEE THEM DIE

Senator Harry Byrd (Va.) opposes relief on the basis of economy. He says he favors social improvements for human values, "yet social security built upon debt is a house built upon the sands."

Henry Morgenthau, Jr., speaking on balancing the budget (Nov. 10) says, "We deliberately used an unbalanced Federal budget during the past four years to meet a great emergency. That policy has succeeded. The emergency that we faced in 1933 no longer exists. *(sic)* We must make in the present juncture . . . a determined movement toward a balanced budget." His chief recommendations for cuts dealt with public highways, public works, unemployment relief, and agriculture.

The opponents of relief are again the privileged group of American industrialists. They are so satisfied with the existing profit system that they refuse to see its human wreckage. They minimize the number of jobless. They blame the workless for being out of work. They cry for balanced budgets when the poor need relief; but when naval appropriations (larger profits for them) are voted, they conveniently ignore the budget.

THEY MUST LIVE

"**Another 1929 collapse** can only be prevented if the buying power of the masses is maintained as production and profits increase. The only answer is a stable, well-planned, efficiently conducted federal program of public works employing the unemployed." (Maury Maverick, Congressman from Texas.)

"**In my opinion** the time has come when we must cease treating the unemployment problem in America as an emergency measure. In a nation where business prosperity has returned there are still 10 million men and women unemployed in private industry. There are approximately six million more who are working part-time and at wages so low that if they were to lose their jobs tomorrow, they would immediately be forced to demand relief or starve." (Rep. Allen of Penn.)

"**Either** a way must be found to admit unemployed people to participation in the economy of private enterprise or else they must be given a definite and respectable status as recipients of insurance benefits or as public workers." (Harry Hopkins.)

"**The Church** makes no claim to expertness in economics and engineering, although within its membership are many highly trained economists and engineers. Methodism does assert, however, that since every unit in the statistical table descriptive of unemployment is a human being, we are vitally concerned and have full authority from the teachings of Jesus to demand the elimination of these anti-social facts. We will not be silenced by critics who offer no solution to these problems." (M. E. Discipline, 1936.)

How do Christians of today interpret and apply the words of Christ, "I was hungry and ye fed me not"? How do we answer the question, "I was eager for work, but ye denied me the right to labor"?

For the preparation of this Bulletin we are indebted to Rev. Wayne White, of Naugatuck, Conn.

Membership in the Federation, $1 and up—10 copies of the *Bulletin* included.